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ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

PATTERN OF CONFERENCES

Letter dated 20 September 1993 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences to the President of the General Assembly

At its recent resumed substantive session, the Committee on Conferences was informed of the economy measures announced by the Secretary-General on 26 August 1993 in the light of the financial crisis and which were currently being implemented by the Secretariat.

While the Committee fully understood the difficult financial situation in which the Organization finds itself, the Committee wished to express its deep concern that these measures departed from General Assembly resolutions, particularly those concerning equal treatment of all official languages (resolution 42/207 C of 11 December 1987) and the simultaneous distribution of documents in all official languages (resolution 36/117 B of 10 December 1981). While the Committee recognized that these measures were intended to reduce expenditures, it was at the same time of the view that they would adversely affect the ability of the General Assembly and its Main Committees to complete their work in 1993. This situation would lead to resumed sessions in 1994 and consequently to additional expenditure in the long run.

The Committee stressed the need to ensure that all meetings foreseen or requested by Member States were serviced and that any economy measures should not impede the continuing and necessary dialogue among States. In particular, the Committee wished to draw attention to the need to provide full services to the informal meetings of Main Committees, to regional groups and to other groups of States usually serviced by United Nations conference services.

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* A/48/150 and Corr.1.

The Committee also expressed concern regarding the measures relating to the distribution of documents. While appreciating the efforts of the Secretary-General to reduce waste in this area, the Committee considered the limitation of distribution to missions of only two copies of official documents per mission too restrictive. Moreover, it stressed that it was necessary to have relevant documents in all official languages available in accordance with the six-week rule.

The Committee on Conferences requests the President of the General Assembly to bring the concerns expressed in the present letter to the attention of the General Committee.

(Signed) Mahmoud BARIMANI
Chairman
Committee on Conferences